

Message Text

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AF-10 ARA-10 /141 W
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P 061447Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1422
INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
USLO PEKING
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
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USMISSION GENEVA
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 10030

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AF, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET PERSPECTIVE OF AFGHAN COUP
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SUMMARY: SOVIET REACTION TO AFGHAN COUP HAS BEEN CAUTIOUS
BUT INCREASINGLY POSITIVE. IT IS EXTREMELY HAZARDOUS TO
PREDICT MOSCOW'S FUTURE POLICIES TOWARD AFGHANISTAN AS A
RESULT OF THE COUP. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON SUCH UNKNOWN AS
SOVIET ASSESSMENT OF (A) THE INTERNAL AFGHAN POLITICAL
SITUATION AND (B) INDIAN SENSITIVITIES ABOUT "OUTSIDE"

THREATS TO DELHI'S EFFORTS TO "REGIONALIZE" AND "NORMALIZE" INTER-STATE RELATIONS IN SOUTH ASIA. BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE, WE BELIEVE THE SOVIETS WILL WORK TO HELP INSURE THE SURVIVABILITY OF THE NEW REGIME AND, IN THE LONGER RUN, ITS CONSOLIDATION OF POWER. AT THE SAME TIME, SOVIETS WILL BE ALERT TO BROADER STRATEGIC/REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS (E.G. RELATIONS WITH INDIA) AND NEED TO WEIGH THESE IN ASSESSING HOW FAR THEY SHOULD GO IN ASSISTING THE KABUL REGIME. IN THE END, THE DURABILITY OF THE NEW PRO-SOVIET GOVERNMENT IN AFGHANISTAN WILL DEPEND CHIEFLY ON INDIGENOUS FACTORS AND NOT PRIMARILY ON THE SOVIET UNION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE PUBLIC SOVIET REACTION TO THE AFGHAN COUPGYAS BEEN CAUTIOUS, PRIMARILY LIMITED TO STRAIGHT NEWS ITEMS, BUT INCREASINGLY POSITIVE IN TONE. THE CAUTION IS UNDOUBTEDLY.. BASED ON A SOVIET INTENTION TO DEFLATE WIDESPREAD SUSPICIONS THAT MOSCOW INSTIGATTD, HAD PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF OR DIRECTLY PARTICIPATED IN THE COUP, AND MAY ALSO REFLECT GENUINE SOVIET UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE NEW REGIME. THE SOVIET PRESS ON MAY 5 GAVE SPECIAL PROMINENCE TO TARAKI'S CONDEMNATION OF ALLEGATIONS IN THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS THAT "FOREIGN INTERFERENCE" CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE COUP. WE EXPECT TO SEE PROGRESSIVELY MORE FAVORABLE COVERAGE OF THE AFGHAN COUP IN THE SOVIET PRESS, WITH EMPHASIS ON FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC SUPPORT FOR THE AFGHAN CONFIDENTIAL

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REGIME AND THE ENHANCED PROSPECTS FOR SOCIAL-ECONOMIC PROGRESS PRODUCED BY THE "REVOLUTION".

2. MOSCOW OF COURSE CAN ONLY BE PLEASED BY THE SUDDEN SEIZURE OF POWER IN AFGHANISTAN BY MEN WHO HAVE LONG BEEN AVOWEDLY "SOCIALIST" AND PRO-SOVIET. IN DECIDING ITS COURSE OF ACTION, MOSCOW WILL HAVE TO BEAR TWO MAIN CONSIDERATIONN IN MIND:

--THE SOVIETS WILL NOT WANT THEIR ACTIVITIES IN AFGHANISTANN TO SET BACK THE USSR'S BROADER STRATEGIC-POLITICAL INTERESTS IN SOUTH ASIA, WHICH CENTER FUNDAMENTALLY ON GOOD INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS. THE SOVIETS REALIZE THAT DELHI'S MAIN FOREIGN POLICY GOALS ARE TO "REGIONALIZE" AND TO "NORMALIZE" INTERSTATE RELATIONS IN SOUTH ASIA, WHILE MINIMIZING THE POTENTIALS FOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE REGION BY OUTSIDE POWERS.

--MOSCOW WILL NOT WANT TO ENCOURAGE, THROUGH EXCESSIVELY OVERT SOVIET IDENTIFICATION WITH THE NEW KABUL REGIME, A "MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE" OF POTENTIALLY ANTI-COMMUNIST/ ANTI-SOVIET ELEMENTS INCLUDING NATIONALIST, ANTI-

COMMUNIST AND ISLAMIC FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN, WHICH COULD COALESCE AND THREATEN THE NEW REGIME WITH A "COUNTER-REVOLUTION."

3. WHAT WILL BE SOVIET SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES? IT IS HAZARDOUS TO ATTEMPT TO PREDICT SHIFTS IN MOSCOW'S POLICIES AS A RESULT OF RECENT EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE SOVIET ASSESSMENT OF THE INTERNAL AFGHAN POLITICAL SCENE, THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE NEW REGIME TURNS OUT TO BE PRO-SOVIET AND/OR GENUINELY NON-ALIGNED. PAST EXPERIENCE LEADS US TO CONCLUDE THAT IN THE SHORT RUN MOSCOW WILL MAINLY BE INTERESTED IN HELPING TO

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1423

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 MOSCOW 10030

INSURE THE SURVIVABILITY OF THE NEW LEFTIST REGIME AND ITS CONSOLIDATION OF POWER. MOSCOW KNOWS THAT THIS WILL BE NO

MEAN FEAT FOR THE NEW RULERS IN KABUL, GIVEN THE BACKGROUND OF RECURRING COUPS AND VIOLENCE IN AFGHAN POLITICAL HISTORY, AND THE DEGREE OF CONSERVATIVE AND ANTI-COMMUNIST SENTIMENT PREVALENT IN AFGHANISTAN. WE ANTICIPATE THAT THE SOVIETS WILL CONTINUE AND PROBABLY INCREASE ECONOMIC AND

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MILITARY AID, AND WORK BEHIND THE SCENES TO BOLSTER THE NEW REGIME THROUGH MATERIAL SUPPORT AND POLITICAL "ADVICE". THE SOVIET "ADVICE" PROBABLY WILL STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING UNITY AMONG THE LEFTISTS AND MILITARY FACTIONS THAT HAVE SEIZED POWER AS THE ONLY HOPE TO ESTABLISH THE PERMANENCE THAT HAS ELUDED ALL AFGHAN REGIMES IN RECENT HISTORY. WE BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIETS WILL ALSO ENCOURAGE THE NEW REGIME TO MOVE QUICKLY AND DRAMATICALLY TO SHOW ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL "PROGRESS" (E.G. CONFISCATION OF SHAH DYNASTY PROPERTY). INTERNATIONALLY, THE SOVIETS WILL SEEK TO "CONSULT" CLOSELY WITH NEW DELHI ON THE SOVIET READING OF EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN IN ORDER TO RE-ASSURE THE INDIANS: OF SOVIET BONA FIDES AND TO DISPEL POSSIBLE INDIAN APPREHENSIONS OF EXCESSIVE "OUTSIDE" INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN. SOVIET PROPAGANDA WILL SELECTIVELY HIGHLIGHT THE RECOGNITION AND WELCOMING OF THE AFGHAN REGIME BY OTHER COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN THE THIRD WORLD AND THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT. MOSCOW WILL WORK THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND ITS BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER (PARTICULARLY NON-ALIGNED AND FELLOW "SOCIALIST" COUNTRIES) TO MOBILIZE AID FOR AFGHANISTAN. WE AGREE THAT THE SOVIETS ARE NOT LIKELY TO ENCOURAGE THE AFGHANS TO HEAT UP THE PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE IN THE SHORT RUN, UNLESS OF COURSE, THIS WOULD BE VIEWED AS HELPFUL IN ASSISTING THE REGIME TO CONSOLIDATE ITS CONTROL INTERNALLY.

4. WHAT WILL BE SOVIET LONG RUN OBJECTIVES? IF SURVIVAL AND CONSOLIDATION ARE THE SHORT RUN IMPERATIVES, WE BELIEVE THAT IN THE LONG RUN THE SOVIETS WILL HOPE TO ENCOURAGE A STEADY STRENGTHENING OF THE KHALQ PARTY'S BASE IN AFGHANISTAN SO THAT THE PARTY AND NOT INDIVIDUALS WILL PROVIDE A FIRMER FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE CONTINUITY AND CONTROL. WE ANTICIPATE THAT THE SOVIETS WILL ALSO ENCOURAGE THE INSTI-

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TUTIONALIZATION OF STATE-PARTY CONTROL MECHANISMS DOWN TO THE GRASS ROOTS LEVEL WHICH ARE CHARACTERISTIC OF ALL COMMUNIST REGIMES. AS THIS PROCESS BUILDS, THE SOVIETS WILL TOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN AS A TRIUMPH OF

"PROGRESSIVE FORCES" AND THE "WORLD REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS""
IN THIS LONG RUN PERSPECTIVE, THE SOVIETS MAY ALSO SEE
AFGHANISTAN AS A REGIONAL "MODEL" FOR OTHER "PROGRESSIVE"
FORCES IN THE REGION SEEKING TO CAPTURE POWER IN THEIR
RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES (THIS IS A ROLE WHICH SOVIET PARTY
THEORETICIANS LIKE TO ATTRIBUTE TO ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA IN
AFRICA, VIETNAM IN ASIA AND CUBA IN LATIN AMERICA).
5. MORE ON THE INDIAN ANGLE: EMBASSY NEW DELHI IS, OF
COURSE, IN A FAR BETTER POSITION TO ASSESS INDIA'S
SENSITIVITIES TO A MORE DIRECT SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN THE
CONSOLIDATION EFFORTS OF THE NEW AFGHAN REGIME. WE WOULD
NOTE THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE WILLINGLY AND QUICKLY SACRIFICED
SHORT TERM LOSSES IN RELATIONS WITH THE US AND OTHER COUN-
TRIES TO REAP WHAT THEY SEE AS LONG TERM GAINS THROUGH
DIRECT AND MASSIVE SUPPORT TO NEW "PROGRESSIVE" REGIMES
IN ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA. IT SEEMS FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT,
HOWEVER, THAT THE INDIANS WOULD BE VERY IRRITATED IF
MOSCOW ATTEMPTED IN THE LONG OR THE SHORT RUN TO INVOLVE
ITSELF IN AFGHANISTAN (AS IT HAS IN ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA)
IN A WAY THAT WOULD INDICATE A SOVIET INTENTION TO DRAW
AFGHANISTAN INTO ITS OWN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE. IT IS NOTE-
WORTHY THAT THE DESAI GOVERNMENT'S MOVES TO IMPROVE RELA-
TIONS WITH THE US AND CHINA HAVE MADE NATURE OF INDO-
SOVIET RELATIONS ALL THE MORE DELICATE. BY IRRITATING
DELHI THROUGH "OVER-INVOLVEMENT" IN AFGHANISTAN, THE SOVIE
WOULD RISK HARMING INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS AND INCREASING THH
POSSIBILITY FOR BETTER SINO-INDIAN AND INDO-US RELATIONS:
A RESULT WHICH WOULD BE VIEWED HERE AS MOST DETRIMENTAL TO
SOVIET STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN SOUTH ASIA AND IN ASIA AS A

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1424

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY

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WHOLE. IN OUR VIEW, THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE SOVIETS
DIRECTLY ASSERT THEMSELVES WILL THEREFORE BE SIGNIFICANTLY
INFLUENCED BY SOVIET PERCEPTIONS OF POSSIBLE INDIAN
OBJECTIONS.

6. IN SUM, IN OUR VIEW, THE DURABILITY OF THE PRO-SOVIET
REGIME IN KABUL, PARTICULARLY IN THE SHORT RUN, WILL DEPEND
CHIEFLY ON INDIGENOUS FACTORS IN AFGHANISTAN AND NOT
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PRIMARILY ON THE ABILITY OF THE SOVIET UNION TO INFLUENCE
DIRECTLY EVENTS ON THE UNPREDICTABLE AFGHAN POLITICAL
SCENE. TOON

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